

## **ABSTRACT**

A method and system for querying a structured document stored in its native format in a database, where the structured document includes a plurality of nodes that form a hierarchical node tree, is disclosed. The method includes providing at least one child pointer in each of the plurality of nodes, where the at least one child pointer points to a corresponding child node of the plurality of nodes, and storing a hint in each of the at least one child pointers. The hint is then utilized to navigate the hierarchical node tree during query evaluation.